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S E R M O N
ON THE
WISDOM OF PROVIDENCE
IN THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORLD.
PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

[Price One Shilling.]

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OF THE
WISDOM OF PROVIDENCE



ADMINISTRATIVE

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UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

A
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ON THE
W I S D O M
OF
P R O V I D E N C E
IN THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORLD.

PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,
ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF
HIS MAJESTY'S INAUGURATION,
OCT. 25, 1762, AT ST. MARY'S.

By JOHN ROTHERAM, M.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, AND ONE OF
THE PREACHERS AT HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPEL AT
WHITEHALL.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE VICE-
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Handwritten signature or initials.

DANIEL ii. 20, 21.

Daniel answered, and said, Blessed be the name of GOD for ever and ever : for wisdom and might are his. And he changeth the times and the seasons : he removeth kings, and setteth up kings.

IF we consider the history of mankind merely as the work of human counsels, no prospect can be more melancholy and displeasing. We see nothing but unsteady and fluctuating designs ; weak and perishing attempts ; a rude heap of tumultuous events lying in confusion ; kingdoms rising after kingdoms, as it were by chance, astonishing the world for a while, and then sinking into oblivion ; and, in a word, all history broken into ten thousand

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fragments. But if we will take along with us to the study of history, a maxim from the inspired volume, if reason will submit to be taught by revelation, and to kindle its lamp at that sacred flame, a new light will be spread over the obscure mass; and the historic page, which was before hardly legible, will become clear and perfectly intelligible. For though nothing but confusion can be expected from weak and erring man, yet HE who is the fountain of wisdom and might, is for ever at the head of all human affairs; the designs of heaven mixing with the designs of men subdue them into order, and give them a permanency which is not their own: and thus amidst all the intricacies of interfering events and clashing interests, one great and noble purpose of providence is still carried on, the general interests of virtue and religion.

This doctrine runs through all revelation, and is in the strongest and most explicit terms delivered in the text. The prophet had been favoured with a view of those grand revolutions that were to happen after the

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the times of the great NEBUCHADNEZZAR, and had seen a succession of empires arising after the Babylonish, all leading to, and terminating in, the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. Upon which he pours forth this sublime address to the God of heaven, in which he acknowledges his supremacy and sovereign rule ; and that all the vicissitudes of times which history tells of, the changes of power, the elevation and overthrow of empires, are no other than parts of the great plan of administration conducted by his wise providence.

What Daniel saw by prophetic intuition we read in the records of ages already past. History therefore should kindle in our breasts the same sentiments that prophecy did in his ; should fill us with the same veneration for our universal Lord, and lead us likewise “ to bless the name of God for
 “ ever and ever, convinced that wisdom
 “ and might are only his : that it is HE
 “ who changeth the times and the seasons,
 “ who removeth kings, and setteth
 “ up kings.”

I shall beg leave to pursue these reflections as a subject well suited to the present occasion, and in the FIRST place to point out some of the marks of wisdom that appear in the constitution and administration of the world; and then SECONDLY, to apply these general reflections to ourselves of this nation, and to the present solemnity.

The former part of the subject will engage us in two distinct enquiries; and it shall be my endeavour

I. To shew, That the constitution of things by which the world is divided into many distinct societies and kingdoms, and by which those kingdoms become subject to changes, revolutions, and overthrow, is upon the whole favourable to virtue and the public good,

II. To prove from history, that the general course of human affairs, the progress of empire and dominion, the principal vicissitudes of times and seasons which have happened in the world, have been subser-
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vient to the establishment and support of religion.

I am first to shew, that the present constitution of the world is upon the whole favourable to virtue and the public good.

There are three ways in which mankind may possibly be supposed to exist. As first, in a state of dissipation and anarchy. But they could not long continue in this state. For so far is it from being a state of nature, though it hath generally been distinguished by that title, that our nature would lead us as fast as possible out of it. There is within us a * sociable and attractive

* The celebrated author of the SPIRIT OF LAWS is of opinion, that mankind in a state of nature, (as it is usually called) that is, before their actual entrance into society, would fly from each other through fear. "Man in such a situation, says he, would feel nothing in himself at first but impotency and weakness; his fears and apprehensions would be excessive, as appears from instances (were there any necessity of proving it) of savages found in forests, trembling at the motion of a leaf, and flying from every shadow." (B. i. c. 2.) But if this be the natural situation of men's minds, how is it possible that they should ever come together in society? If they have naturally

tive principle, which joined with our mutual wants and dependencies, forms mankind
into

naturally a dread of each other, society must be an unnatural state, and a state of violence, into which none could be desirous of entering, for that were a contradiction, to suppose their desires moving them to the same thing from which their fears withheld them. Before they could enter into society, their minds must have undergone a total change, and must have received a tendency directly opposite to the natural one; for otherwise, nothing but an external coercive power could keep them in society, with such a supposed impulse constantly inclining them to fly off from it. The celebrated writer indeed thinks otherwise, and labours to make fear itself a principle of association. "Fear, continues he, would incline men to shun one another; but the marks of this fear being reciprocal, would soon induce them to associate." Strange conception! Fear inclines an individual to fly from the rest of his species: but suppose that fear to subsist equally in every one of the species, and then it will bring them together. That is, a repulsive power being doubled, becomes an attractive power. The author seems indeed sensible of the insufficiency of that principle which he had thought proper to lay at the foundation of society. For he immediately adds: "besides, this association would quickly follow from the very pleasure one animal feels at the approach of another of the same species." But if men feel a pleasure at the approach of each other, where is that fear which makes them shun each other? Thus it is first said, that men shun each other through fear: then it is added, that this fear brings them to associate: and last of all, that this association arises from another

into societies, as naturally as the parts of matter run into distinct masses. And societies

another principle of love for our species. It is hardly possible to conceive that sentiments so jarring as these could come from any one author, much less from an author so justly admired as Baron MONTESQUIEU is, for judgment and precision, for depth and clearness of thought. It is impossible to build society on any other principle than that of mutual benevolence. If there is implanted in our breasts a tendency towards each other, as there certainly is, we have in this a natural and a sufficient foundation of society, and nothing but a love of novelty and extreme refinement can make us look out for any other, or pitch upon that above all others, whose natural operation is not to associate but to divide. The primary sentiment of our nature towards each other is benevolence. And that fear which is observed in some instances is an adventitious thing. In the case of savages, it may possibly arise from their being of a different species. If not, it is easily accounted for from the many dangers to which they must have been exposed. It hath been often remarked, that men in the beginning of life are most commonly open and unsuspicious. As they advance in life, the instances of falsehood and treachery they meet with often change their temper, and render them jealous and distrustful. This proves benevolence to be the natural sentiment, and fear the acquired one. For if fear were the natural sentiment, and benevolence acquired, the progress of the temper would be just the reverse of what hath been observed. Fear would preside in that season of life over which nature rules, and benevolence, if it ever took place, would spring

cieties of any kind once being formed, a common interest arises, which necessarily leads to laws, subordination, and government. Or, secondly, mankind may be supposed to exist under one universal government. But this being a machine too unwieldy for the management of human power, would naturally resolve itself into several smaller bodies. These two conditions then lead alike to a third, which hath actually taken place in all ages, in which the world is divided into several independent societies and governments. This alone hath a right to be considered as a state of nature, for the same reason which leads us to call that the natural state of the material world wherein
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spring up from our commerce with mankind, and flourish most where society is the most artificial.

The point here discussed is of too much importance to make any apology for this long note necessary. I cannot forbear adding, that it is with regret I have produced an instance of a blemish from an author who abounds with beauties and excellencies. But the more excellent an author is, the more care should be taken to guard against any errors that may have escaped him. I take this opportunity of informing the reader, that this whole division of the discourse, was left out in preaching.

it is distinguished into a beautiful variety of bodies ; and not that wherein it is resolved into certain imaginary atoms, which are supposed to be the first principles of all bodies. With no kind of propriety can we call any other state natural, but that to which our nature inclines us, and in which the laws of our nature take place. This state gives many advantages to virtue, and in many ways promotes the public good.

Benevolence is the principle by which societies are held together. But did it exist only in that degree in which it is extended to all mankind, the band would be too weak. Spread over the whole world benevolence would have too large a field. To render it more active and useful it must be compressed within narrower bounds. The distribution of mankind into various societies, the rise, the progress, the declension of those societies, are all plainly calculated to form, to strengthen, to renew this social bond. Too large a space lay between private and universal love. Something was wanting to form a communication be-

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tween them. The love of our country therefore was interposed ; and through the various gradations of society benevolence is led on from distance to distance, and is thus trained up by degrees to take the boldest flights. And as in a fine prospect the sight is not all at once lost in a vast extent of empty air, but is carried forward from object to object to the utmost horizon ; so in the social affections there are many intermediate circles between the widest and the narrowest, and from the love of family we advance by easy steps through friends, citizens, and countrymen, to the love of mankind.

No sooner are mankind thrown into distinct societies and governments than order starts up out of confusion, the rude and savage multitudes, which before over-ran the earth, are reduced into well proportioned bodies, and the chaos becomes a creation. A new set of relations and duties arises, and a new field is opened to virtue. If we consider only the internal constitution of any separate kingdom; we see the laws of
politics

politics and good government rising on those of morals. If we go farther, and consider the relation of kingdoms to each other, we see duties of a superiour order rising still higher than the former, and giving birth to the law of nations. Mankind combined into bodies are capable of many great enterprizes, for which they would be otherwise absolutely unfit. The subjects of every government are united by a common interest, and act as if they were informed by one common soul. Their powers of every kind are encreased, and become equal to the greatest attempts. Works of public utility are set on foot, manufactures are established, commerce is extended, arts are improved, and public virtue dispenses all its blessings.

Behold a virtuous prince at the head of an obedient people, exercising the godlike power of extending happiness to millions; and you will hardly be able to persuade yourself that you do not see something more than human *. And though this supreme

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* A virtuous prince is capable of doing good much more effectually in a territory limited within reasonable bounds,

lot of human felicity falls indeed to the share of few ; yet in a well regulated government, every member, in proportion to his station and abilities, hath an enlarged sphere of action, a capacity of doing good, beyond what he could have had under any other condition.

It can be thought no just objection to this plan of administration, that this increased power is often misapplied. Heaven furnishes man with powers and abilities. The application of those powers to good or ill purposes constitutes the merit or demerit of every man's character, and therefore the direction of them is ordinarily left to his free-will guided by proper lights.

But in fact in this constitution of things provision is made with no less wisdom for the checking and controuling of vice, than to give strength and success to virtue. The laws

bounds, such as the world is generally divided into, than he could have been at the head of an universal monarchy, that vain dream of some princes boundless ambition. His limited power would there have been lost upon too vast an object, which produces its full effect upon an object proportioned to his abilities.

laws sustained by the collected power of a people operate strongly against the vices of individuals, and lay some restraint at least upon wicked princes. Nay even in those kingdoms where princes are above the controul of laws, their vices are confined within some certain bounds. The neighbouring states and kingdoms form a barrier around them which they cannot without difficulty pass. By their vigilance the pernicious designs of an ambitious prince are restrained. Their jealousy confines and often punishes his ambition. And thus the tempest falls upon a single spot, which otherwise might have carried desolation over half the world.

If kingdoms were virtuous they would be everlasting. But as this can hardly happen, it is for the interest of virtue that they should fall when they become corrupted. To see more clearly the marks of wisdom in the fall of empires, we will briefly consider their natural course, and the circumstances that usually accompany their origin, their progress, and their decline.

Kingdoms

Kingdoms in their infancy are under a necessity of cultivating the hardy and manly virtues. Nothing but this internal strength can enable them to resist the acts of violence to which they are ever exposed from some powerful neighbour, and to surmount those difficulties with which they must continually struggle. Temperance and frugality are the natural produce of the times, the vigorous growth of a barren soil. But this is not all. The subjects of an infant state are united amongst each other by the strongest ties. The common interest is felt by all, and is at that time so clear and simple a thing that it cannot be mistaken. The connection between public and private good is so evident, that no one attempts to separate them, much less to set up an opposition between them. Every one sees that he has no way of pursuing his own interest but by means of the public. Every eye therefore is fixed on the public safety, and even watches with jealousy over the interests of their fellow subjects, because every danger, though but of a part, threatens ruin to the whole. The prosperity, the safety of every little family is involved in the common weal;
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every public loss shakes each private fortune, and every acquisition to the public strengthens and enriches every individual. In a word, in such a state virtue is seldom either neglected or unrewarded. It is of such immediate service to the public, that it is eagerly sought for every where, drawn from its obscurity, and because every one partakes in its benefits, is applauded by every voice.

That activity and strength of constitution which is natural to kingdoms in their early periods, cannot fail of bringing them forwards, of extending their dominions and encreasing their power, till at length from a concurrence of various causes these principles are weakened and lost. Prosperity, ease, indulgence, weakness, overthrow, follow each other in a natural train. Nor is it only that the strength of individuals is impaired by the opportunities of ease and indulgence. In an extensive and flourishing kingdom many circumstances contribute to break that union amongst its subjects in which its original strength consisted, to nurse the selfish passions, and to weaken
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the social affections. There is no longer that close connection which before subsisted between the public and private good, which made public success the greatest private blessing that could happen. Men now begin to look upon these as two very different objects; and as private interest enlarges and becomes more considerable, the public diminishes in their eyes, and they behold it with more indifference. In a wide extended territory there is not that common feeling for each other, which makes the good of every one the general concern. The fortunes of individuals may perish, nay whole provinces may fall, while the central parts of this vast body hardly feel the shock. The habitual application which every subject gives to the care of his private fortune contracts the affections instead of enlarging them, draws them off from the public, and centers them within his own narrow concerns. The pursuit of commerce *, and
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* It is reckoned amongst the causes which raised and gave permanency to the Roman republic, that this brave people never practised commerce, nor the lucrative arts. Leaving these to slaves, their only occupation

of all gainful arts, the acquisition of riches; extent of private property; love of pleasure; ambition of honours; all have a strong tendency this way. In proportion as they feed private and selfish love, they weaken the love of the public. Competitions arise; separate interests are pursued every where crossing and interfering with each other; virtue is so far from meeting with public encouragement, that jealousy and envy join with every fashionable accomplishment to discountenance and suppress it as a dangerous rival: and thus is the band weakened by which society is held together, and the way is prepared for its dissolution.

If it be asked how far a kingdom may with safety extend its dominions, and at what period of encrease it may be supposed to subsist in its utmost perfection; the reply must be, that this depends indeed upon various circumstances in the situation and

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occupation was the art of war, and this their only way to magistracies and honours. The military virtues therefore remained amongst them after all others were gone, and upheld their empire almost beyond its natural period. *Considerations sur les causes, &c.*

p. 104.

genius of a people *. Yet this general rule may assist us in forming the estimate, that a kingdom then subsists in its fullest and best proportion, when the love of country forms a just

* Nature hath set certain bounds to kingdoms for the mortification of their ambition, saith MONTESQUIEU, Confid. p. 52. It is certain that there are in the very face of the globe itself many obstacles to the progress of unmeasured ambition; many natural lines drawn which seem to have been intended for the boundaries of kingdoms, and by which they are most conveniently circumscribed. However this circumstance must not be considered alone, but must always be joined with the genius of a people. If we would form any just conclusions about the extent to which a kingdom may be carried without injury to itself, the situation and the genius of a people must always be combined. On this principle it must be allowed, that a commercial kingdom, placed in a situation favourable to commerce, is of all others capable of the greatest extent. Commerce carries on a constant circulation through the whole body of a kingdom, and opens a free communication between its remotest parts. It forms a new and artificial connection, which strengthens that natural dependance which mankind have upon each other; and by its various ties, not only binds the different classes of people in a kingdom to each other, but likewise kingdom to kingdom in the firmest alliances. Where the colonies of such a kingdom are well chosen, it is hard to say what bounds can be set to it: because every new acquisition of this kind adds to the public strength, by encreasing that commerce on which the public strength is founded, and quickening that circulation by which the different parts of a kingdom are united.

a just mean between private and public love. * Below this period, patriotism is not sufficiently distinguished from private affection: † beyond it, it begins to be confounded with universal. A society too small wants the requisite power: a society too large wants the requisite union. And this shews the wisdom of providence in laying out the world in general into kingdoms of moderate dimensions.

Often doth heaven interpose to check the progress of corruption, and by wholesome severities to save a licentious people hastening to ruin. War and the whole train of natural calamities, come the ministers of providence to correct the abuses of prosperity, and to restore the interests of decayed

D 2 virtue.

* This was the case of the antient patriarchal governments; and we have numerous instances to the same purpose in the hords, the tribes, the clans of modern times

† This was the case of the Roman empire, and of that which is sometimes called the Macedonian, and sometimes the Grecian, but which might with more propriety be called the Alexandrine empire; because it was not the work of a nation, but, what is peculiar to itself, was raised by one man, and fell with him.

become

virtue. Then doth a nation, alarmed at the danger, turn back to those principles from which it had departed; private interest once more awakens a concern for the public; the common danger again unites a people over whom every better principle had lost its power; the importance of virtue to the public service is again discovered, and virtue comes once more into repute*.

But

* Reformation is the great end of all calamities, public and private. They are manifestly calculated to produce this effect, and it must be the fault of nations as well as individuals, if they are not both the better for them. Nations no doubt would wish to enjoy perpetual peace and prosperity, as individuals would uninterrupted health; but it is not for the happiness of either to be indulged in this wish. I beg leave to submit it to every just observer of mankind, and every competent judge of the true interests of a people, whether the war, in which we are now engaged, hath not been in some respects a blessing to this nation; whether it hath not recalled us from that effeminacy into which we were sinking fast, and which was but too justly complained of in the beginning of the war; and brought us back some steps at least towards that national and manly character by which we have been distinguished in former times: and whether even that diminution of wealth which appears so extremely alarming to some, if it is suffered to produce its proper effect upon us, to check that unbounded profusion, that worthless emulation in every branch

But if a people is so far sunk in profligacy that all these admonitions are lost upon them, if the master of the vineyard cometh year after year seeking for fruit and findeth none, then how justly doth that decree go forth, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" And mark how favourable to virtue is the event, and how well its interests are preserved even in the extirpation and overthrow of kingdoms. For it is not only that a mass of corruption is swept away, and a scene wherein vice was triumphant is brought to a conclusion; but where a depraved people falls, several new states and kingdoms rise upon its ruins. A brave and hardy race springs up, amongst whom are again cultivated all those virtues which are familiar to kingdoms in their early periods. And thus are the seeds of virtue continually sown.

Having

branch of luxury and idle expence which were sed by its redundancy, and to revive amongst us a spirit of industry and plain sobriety, whether even this draining of our national wealth, which in the estimate of some is the greatest evil that could befall us, will not leave us an happier people than any addition to our treasures would have done. There will always be left, enough for virtue, for vice too much.

Having taken this short view of the marks of wisdom that appear in the constitution of the world, we will now have recourse to history, and endeavour to prove from facts, that the general course of human affairs, the progress of empire and dominion, the principal vicissitudes of times and seasons which have happened in the world, have been subservient to the establishment and support of religion.

In order to this, I need only appeal to certain undeniable and well-known facts.

If we look back to the original distribution of mankind into distinct and separate nations, we find, from the only authentic record of that event, that though this scattering of them abroad over the face of the whole earth, was inflicted as an immediate punishment for some * daring attempt, yet
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* It was necessary for the population of the world, and indeed for the well-being of mankind themselves, (as appears from all that hath been said in the former part of this discourse) that they should not long continue in one body, but should proceed as they encreased

was it, as punishments sent by heaven always are, at the same time a blessing. By the

to disperse themselves into different colonies, and to form new and distinct societies. It can hardly be doubted that this was the intention of providence from the beginning; and it is probable that this intention was signified to mankind in due time after the flood. It is indeed clearly implied in God's first blessing to NOAH and his sons: "be fruitful, and multiply, and *replenish the earth*." Nay it may be presumed, that not only the general intention, but likewise the plan of their dispersion, was proposed to them before the time came for carrying it into execution. Accordingly we find such a plan laid down before the account of the dispersion of mankind, and the precise time pointed out when it was communicated. "Unto EBER were born two sons: the name of one was PELEG, for in his days was the earth divided." I know that this hath constantly been supposed to allude to the actual dispersion of mankind at Babel; and accordingly it hath been thought right to fix the time of that event to the birth of PELEG. But "the division of the earth amongst mankind," and "the dispersion of mankind over the earth," are two very distinct things, and should by no means be confounded. In the beginning of the fourth generation then, when men were sufficiently encreased, God commanded them to separate. In obedience to the divine will, it is probable that NOAH himself with the family that was born to him after the flood, immediately left the rest of his descendants, and moved towards the east. This seems probable, both because he appears to have had no share in the future transactions of that part of mankind who were descended from his ante-diluvian

the disuniting of mankind, and breaking them into smaller societies, which was the necessary

sons, to whom the narrative of the sacred historian is confined; and because there are several good reasons for supposing that he himself was the founder of the Chinese empire. He left his other descendants there with instructions how they were to proceed in peopling the western world. For this purpose it was not necessary that they should be possessed of any accurate knowledge of geography. The earth was so favourably laid out, that it was sufficient to tell them, that their progress was to be in a straight line westward till they should come to the Mediterranean sea; and then dividing to the right and left, the families of JAPHET and HAM would, by the Isthmus of Pelusium on the one hand, and by the Straits of Byzantium and the Grecian islands on the other, be let into the different continents prepared for their reception. But they had not proceeded far when they impiously refused to carry the design into execution. They determined to take up their residence in the plains of Shinar, and entered upon measures to keep themselves united in one body. For we are told that the building the tower of Babel was projected with this express view, to prevent "their being scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." But here heaven interposed, and by the confusion of tongues compelled them to disperse, and "scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth." This account sets at once the guilt of men's attempt, and the propriety of the miracle, in the strongest point of view. The building of the tower of Babel was a vain effort of men to prevent their dispersion, in direct opposition to the purpose of heaven. The confusion
of

necessary consequence of introducing a variety of languages amongst them, that corruption, which soon took place, was effectually prevented from becoming universal. For whilst they continued in one body, corruption once begun might easily be continued, and universally diffused, like motion

of tongues baffled this impious attempt, compleated the distinction of families, and laid them under a necessity of carrying the designs of providence into execution.

I have here supposed with the highest probability, and not without some degree of express proof, that God had signified to mankind his will, that they should disperse themselves according to their families for the better population of the earth. This point is expressly affirmed by JOSEPHUS, who says, "That God commanded them to send out colonies." Ant. Jud. L. i. c. 4. And Heidegger in his dissertation on the dispersion of mankind, sect. 9, says, that most of the antients were of opinion that NOAH divided the world amongst his descendants before they came into the plain of Shinar.

In this whole note I have only enlarged upon, and endeavoured to confirm the idea of the great and learned Archbishop USHER, as it appears in his annals. And I was the rather induced to do this, because I could not, without a mixture of surprize and concern, behold the many different, vague, and even extravagant opinions maintained by succeeding commentators with regard to this transaction, after so clear and natural an account had been given of it by this eminent writer.

through a mass of water. But when they were classed out into various divisions and subdivisions, corruption might indeed still spread itself over that division where it had its beginning, but could not so easily be propagated farther. It would meet with opposition in passing from circle to circle, and wherever the communication was broken, its progress would be interrupted and retarded. The world would resemble different vortices, each maintaining its own proper motion.

But strong as these natural fences were by which the bulk of mankind was now reduced into different societies, they were not yet strong enough to resist the force of increasing corruption. It was thought proper therefore for the security of revelation, and the reconveyance of it in due time to all mankind, to take one peculiar people from the midst of mankind, to cut them off in a great measure from all intercourse with other nations, and to form them into a select independant society. For this end it became expedient to prevent all those connections

nections and alliances with others which they must naturally have formed had they been suffered to grow up to power and distinction in the same place; and to guard against the propagation of those prevailing corruptions which could not fail of gaining a strong influence over them by means of that veneration which they would naturally have entertained for the customs of their country. They had therefore no natural country, no native situation like the rest of mankind; but were transplanted from soil to soil, till they were at last fixed in a wonderful manner in that which was prepared for their reception. ABRAHAM the great parent of this people was torn from all his dearest connections, was doomed to a life of perpetual exile, to become a pilgrim without the hopes of an establishment, and a wanderer amongst strangers. He was no more to return to his native land, no more to think of it indeed without pain and blushing for its degeneracy *. The patriarchs,

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* “ By faith ABRAHAM, when he was called to
 “ go out into a place which he should after receive
 “ for

his immediate successors, pursued the same erratic and pastoral life; and it was not till after they had been prepared by the sufferings of slavery, and by a rigorous discipline due to their disobedience of forty years in a desert, that their descendants were trusted with the possession of the promised land. Then by the force of miracles, and of many peculiar institutions, a boundary was formed around them of uncommon strength. So much care was necessary to guard against the contagion of hereditary and national corruptions.

But as this temporary advantage was not given to this people for their own sakes
only

“ for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not “ knowing whither he went.” Heb. xi. 8. A man, venerable for his years and piety, sent out from his country, his kindred, and his father’s house, to spend the remainder of his days amongst strangers, a pilgrim in a foreign land, and a wanderer in the world; is a picture that hath something in it wonderfully striking and pathetic. But when we consider him as under the leading hand of providence, executing a divine commission, and the father of blessings to all mankind, we no longer compassionate, but admire the great sufferer, and think an exile like this superior to all domestic honours.

only (for they seem indeed to have been altogether unworthy of it) but for the common good *, therefore it is remarkable that their situation was such as brought them into frequent contact with the most considerable monarchies of ancient times. They were seated in the center of the Egyptian, the Babylonish, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires. Into these great kingdoms frequent † channels were

* This is clear from the language of revelation throughout, in which from the beginning salvation is always spoken of as an universal blessing. The promise to ABRAHAM was, "in thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH be blessed." More need not be said at present to shew that religion never was of that narrow and contracted spirit which some would ascribe to it, but was always conducted on principles of the most free and unbounded benevolence. If it had not been limited for a while it must have been lost; and the general communication of revealed truth which christianity hath made, could not have been brought about, but by its temporary confinement.

† This was the good consequence which heaven drew from the repeated disobedience and frequent relapses into idolatry of the Israelites: and this great purpose was effected by their frequent captivities, by the residence of DANIEL in a foreign court, by the establishment of ONIAS in Egypt, by the dispersion of the ten tribes, and by the final subjection of

were opened from that small district within which the true revelation was at that time confined; and thus new supplies of wisdom and divine truth were at fit seasons diffused through the world.

It may be proper to add, that those ancient kingdoms to which providence granted the longest duration, were, in their early periods at least, famed for wisdom and virtue *.

As the eastern part of the world was first peopled, great and extensive empires were

of the Jewish kingdom to the Roman dominion. It is supposed, upon very probable grounds, that PYTHAGORAS, PLATO, and ZOROASTER, borrowed from the mosaic writings many of those truths which shine with such lustre amongst their errors.

* To those kingdoms above-mentioned we may add, as another instance of this, the Chinese; who indeed seem to have preserved their primitive simplicity and purity of manners longer than any other people upon record. They did not fall into idolatry till the heresy of Fo was brought in amongst them from India, which happened not till 64 years after Christ. See Mod. Un. Hist. vol. viii. p. 339. A circumstance which gives great probability to the opinion, which wants not the support of many other proofs, that they spring from a colony planted and formed by the hand of our great progenitor NOAH himself.

were first formed there, and there learning and the arts were first cultivated and brought to perfection. But whilst science and empire flourished in the east, a power was rising by degrees in the western world which was one day to surpass all that had gone before it. * Unknown to the proud empires of the east which vainly flattered themselves that they divided the world amongst them, this power was then silently advancing from conquest to conquest, and the Roman Eagle was by degrees strengthening her wing, and preparing to take her flight round half the globe. The succession of these great monarchies led by degrees to that favourable conjuncture, that fulness of time which was fitted for the appearance of christianity.

* There were, says MONTESQUIEU, at that time *two distinct worlds*, in one of which the Romans struggled with the Carthaginians for the sovereignty, whilst the other was shaken by the dissensions that happened amongst the successors of ALEXANDER. And, in a note, he adds, It is truly surprizing, as JOSEPHUS remarks in his book against APPION, that neither HERODOTUS or THUCYDIDES have ever mentioned the Romans, notwithstanding the great wars in which they were at that time engaged. Confid. c. 5.

nity. They arose after each other, enlarged upon each other, till at length the Roman absorbed all the rest; and compleated that spacious field, that wide-extended civilized empire, through which christianity made its rapid progress.

To favour this great event, and to render the first appearance of our holy religion at once more august and more secure, these struggles of ambition, these long contests for dominion, subsided at length into an universal peace. That stormy ocean which had been for ages in continual agitation, now all at once sunk into a surprising calm, and the earth was instantly overspread with tranquillity to receive the Prince of Peace.

The introduction of christianity was preceded likewise by a remarkable degree of knowledge, and the illumination of science fore-ran the light of the gospel. Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome poured from their separate urns those streams of science, which joining in one great flood overspread the vast Roman empire. And thus was revelation enabled to give a most illustrious
proof

proof of its coming from heaven, by diffusing over the world all at once a light superiour to all collected human wisdom in its brightest glory.

And need we ask who conducted all these great events, and who brought them to a concurrence? At the same period of time, the promised Messiah came: the greatest empire that ever existed was in its greatest glory: learning flourished beyond what it had done in any former age: and the world was blessed with universal peace. A coincidence of facts, every one of which in itself is so extraordinary, that it cannot be paralleled by any other times, clearly points out the hand of that supreme over-ruling power, who from eternity beheld the great plan of his providence through its whole extent, "who alone can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, MY counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure *."

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To

* ISAIAH xlvii. 10.

To put this beyond all doubt let it be observed, that these events took their rise in remotest ages, and were prepared in times and countries far distant from and unknown to each other. Empire which sprung up amidst the seven hills of Rome; science nursed amidst the academic groves; and religion from the obscure vales of Judea, all met at one grand crisis. To each other unknown, they must have been conducted by the hand of providence. They met, and peace from heaven crowned them with her olive.

It was necessary for the establishment of christianity, that it should be furnished with every kind of evidence, and approved by every test to which it could be brought. It was not sufficient therefore that it went through the sharpest inquiries of philosophy; it must likewise undergo the severer trials of persecution. Hence the times of trouble and distress that followed hard upon the Augustan tranquillity. Behold here then the clearest footsteps of a divine interposition: behold even those to whom our holy religion could not be known, joining with
its

its bitterest enemies to bring about its establishment. For christianity PYTHAGORAS and PLATO taught ; for christianity CÆSAR triumphed, and * NERO persecuted.

F 2

No

* “ It is observable, that from the beginning of the reign of TIBERIUS down to CONSTANTINE, the Romans had no less than thirty-seven Emperors, whose reigns, one with another, amount only to seven years for each. Take the same space of time in the English history, from WILLIAM the Conqueror, and you have no more than eleven kings, and their reigns will be of twenty-seven years one with another.”

“ This very quick succession of the Roman emperors for the three first centuries, the violent and untimely deaths by which many of them perished, the empires often falling into the hands of persons not related to their predecessors, but their enemies and rivals, and not disposed to adopt their private views and animosities, was of singular advantage to christianity, and made the persecutions less violent and less lasting than they would else have been, and may very reasonably be looked upon as providential.” JORTIN’S Rem. on Eccles. Hist. vol. iii. p. 301.

This remark is perfectly just. Both the mosaic and christian dispensations were at their origin tried by persecution. The persecutors of the Israelites were overthrown in a miraculous manner. Christianity was likewise confirmed by miracles ; but the different characters of the two dispensations required that their miracles should be of a different kind. It was necessary

No sooner had its truth been established by every kind of evidence, than it was taken under the protection of the civil power. But though the church gained by this means new strength and support against its enemies, and its triumph was compleated over all human opposition, yet was it in some respects hurt by the connection. Whilst it lay under oppression it preserved its pure evangelical spirit untainted, and nothing was seen amongst its professors but that meekness, humility, and patience, that holy zeal, and heavenly charity, with which the
gospel

cessary that the Mosaic dispensation should contract and involve every thing within itself; and should be contrived to repel and exclude all other nations; because there was no other way of preserving the purity of its doctrines untainted, and continuing the chain of evidence unbroken through many idolatrous ages. Its miracles therefore were to fill the world with terror and astonishment. The Christian dispensation on the contrary was to spread amongst all mankind, and to join them all in bands of benevolence and charity. Its miracles therefore were to be such as might conciliate the minds of men. Nothing of the terrible or destructive was here to be admitted. Consequently its persecutors were not to be destroyed by miracles. Providence therefore wisely provided that the reigns of persecuting emperors should in the natural course of things be remarkably short.

gospel must ever inspire all true believers. But the offspring of this new alliance was a mixed race, which partook at least as much of the temper of its worldly as its divine parent. Ambition, and a thirst of encreasing wealth and power, crept into the church; and at least as much as the state was sanctified, the church was secularized in return. It became every day more and more anxious about its temporal advantages and privileges, and of course more careless and indifferent about its true and spiritual interests. Pride, and a lust of power, banished from the breasts of CHURCHMEN every christian grace: a spiritual tyranny, a thing unknown to the gospel, was erected; and christian Rome, without the watchful care of providence, would have been as fatal to christianity, as pagan Rome had been, under the direction of providence, friendly.

But the hand of heaven averted the calamity. Power and learning were at once withdrawn from the church when it came to be corrupted. The vast Roman empire
fell;

fell ; and a great number of Gothic kingdoms arose on its ruins.

And mark the care of providence for the interests of religion in this event. The seeds of christianity which had been spread over the whole body of the Roman empire, were preserved in all those fragments into which it was now broken, and even conveyed by many of its barbarous conquerors beyond its utmost limits. There they took root and grew up at leisure, whilst by the same means a check was given to the spreading of errors and heresies which now began to abound, by interrupting once more that free communication between the distant parts of the world which had been established for the service of religion. Witness the * Arian errors, which sprang up in the eastern empire, and were not till after much opposition introduced into the west. There
was

* Constance favorisa l'Arianisme, et Jovien la doctrine du Concile de Niceé. Valens fait la guerre aux Catholiques, et Gratien de même que Valentinien aux heretiques. MABLY Observations sur les Romains, vol. i. p. 234.

was still some corner where truth was received and nourished up uninfected. Thus was the world laid open to facilitate the propagation of truth, and again divided into smaller parts to hinder the spreading of error.

In the mean time the remains of learning were saved in the east from amidst the general wreck, by the * removal of the seat
of

* It hath been generally said, that this event was one principal cause of the downfall of the Roman empire. But imperial magnificence could not uphold it, after all its principles of internal strength were gone. It was then so much weakened by its degeneracy, and by its magnitude, that it was no longer in a condition to resist that force which pressed upon it on every side, but must give way in some part of its vast circumference. The strongest impression was made on the west, and of course that part was first laid in ruins. Had the whole empire then been united in one body, it must have fallen in one body. But by its division the eastern empire survived. So far then was this step from causing the downfall of the empire, that it was a means of saving a part of it. Which answered two great purposes, and doubly served religion. The western or Greek church was saved from the spiritual usurpation of the Romish: and learning was preserved from the fury of Gothic barbarism to be an instrument in due time of retrieving Europe from the tyranny of superstition.

of empire from Rome to Constantinople; which otherwise must have perished entirely when the northern nations over-ran the western empire. A frightful night of superstition and error succeeded in Europe; in the midst of which ignorance at least performed this service; she lent her veil to throw over the shameful degeneracy of those days, and in some measure to cover and conceal them from the public view.

In these times of darkness were engendered all those foul corrupt doctrines, with which, at the returning dawn of reason and learning, the world saw with astonishment the christian church over-run. For learning again came from its retreat in a corner of Arabia; and those sparks of science which were brought into Europe by the Grecian scholars, exiles from their country at the taking of Constantinople, being scattered wide over the west, and there cherished and blown up into a flame, helped to enlighten us in the glorious work of reformation. Again doth learning flourish; reason again asserts the free exercise of her powers; those errors with which the face
of

of religion was deformed, gradually disappear, and the gospel is seen once more in its native purity. The spiritual tyranny seems to be fast upon its decline; those chains with which it had bound most of the powers of Europe in the long reign of ignorance and superstition seem to be falling off; Rome herself begins to be ashamed of her monstrous doctrines, to palliate and cloak them, and to shew a modesty which may give us some hopes of her return at last to the obedience of that sacred truth from which she hath long departed. And oh, may we see the happy day when the true gospel light and liberty shall be every where restored!

These facts, briefly touched as they have been, are sufficient to shew that an ever watchful providence guides the course of human affairs, and directs all events in the end to favour his own great purposes, which are in truth no other than to support the interests of religion, and thereby the good of mankind.

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We are not indeed to suppose from what hath been advanced, that every king or governor is raised up immediately by the hand of providence. The supreme ruler in general suffers the natural course of things to take place, nor doth he, except in extraordinary cases, controul the will of princes. Yet we may upon good grounds believe that HE oftener interposes in the fate of kings than of persons in inferiour stations. Because by kings thousands are influenced. As in a grand machine the master's hand touches one of those principal springs by which a number of inferiour wheels are guided in their motion. In particular, when wicked men rise to power, his wisdom is manifested in bringing forth good out of evil, and making their pernicious designs subservient to some useful end of his providence. And though we may not be able to discern the hand of heaven in every particular incident of history, yet the guidance of supreme wisdom is extremely visible in the whole plan, or in any considerable portion of it. The great laws of providence are accomodated as far as may be to the free-

free-will of man ; and the working up of these together must make a mixture, which to every just observer must appear worthy of admiration, though it cannot have all the lustre of pure, unclouded, heavenly wisdom. It is the tempering and according of the divine and human schemes together, which makes that beautiful tissue of which history is composed ; where the grand lines of order are still preserved amidst much seeming irregularity. On this plan some little deviations will arise, some short interruptions the perverseness of man will occasion : but the main stream of events all the while flows on in the direction which heaven hath appointed them.

All human power and wisdom are indeed by their own nature confined within very narrow limits ; and all the designs of man, as far as they depend on man, must soon come to a conclusion. But by the overruling will of providence they are often carried out far beyond their original aim ; and their train of consequences made to extend into remotest ages. Thus, if we

regard the motions of the secondary planets alone, we see them hastening to their period, and their revolutions quickly returning into themselves. Yet all the while that they seem to pursue only their own particular course, they are by a superiour influence of their primary planets carried along in another orbit far more extensive than their own.

The application of this doctrine to ourselves is extremely obvious. For since it appears that kingdoms are raised and upheld by providence for the good of mankind and the support of virtue, it follows, that if we would engage the blessing of heaven on our country, we must firmly adhere to whatever principles are the most excellent in our constitution, and maintain every worthy part of our national character. Give me leave then to call to mind some principal parts of that character by which this nation hath been distinguished in former times, and for the sake of which it hath been hitherto preserved. The cultivation of these will be our only true way of ex-
 pressing

pressing a love for our country. For they only can be supposed to love their country who appear anxious to support the dignity of its character.

And in these doubtful and dangerous times, where can we begin better than by reflecting on that liberty, and those numerous blessings belonging to liberty, which have been handed down to us by our great forefathers; together with that firmness and bravery which they ever shewed in defence of these blessings?

Our excellent constitution hath been a work of ages. The seeds of liberty were sown early in our land, but it required much time to bring them to maturity. Our kingdom and our constitution grew up together both from rude beginnings. Those small
* districts into which these islands were at
first

* It may be observed that kingdoms most distinguished for bravery and a spirit of liberty, which never subsisted long apart, have arisen, like the British, from amidst small states which gave a long exercise to their valour before they were subdued. Such were the Grecian states and the Roman republic.

first divided, after many sharp conflicts amongst themselves, were by degrees united to each other, till at length our kingdom grew up to its full proportion. And so much do the strength and welfare of our country depend upon this union, that little do they regard, or at least understand, its true interest, who would endeavour to divide again a kingdom which it hath been the work of ages to unite; and to reduce it back to its first principles, by tracing over again that line of distinction between its several parts which hath been happily obliterated. Our constitution in the same manner, which was in its original an imperfect mixture of an untamed wildness with arbitrary power, after various struggles in which it was more than once brought into the utmost danger, came at length to that well poised frame of government wherein all the parts ballance and sustain each other.

It is truly remarkable that our kingdom came to that magnitude which seems to have been marked out for it by nature, much about the same time that our constitution

stitution likewise was brought to perfection. It is still more remarkable, that these events followed close upon that happy æra which saw the reformation compleated and established upon a firm basis. When we had received the true religion of the gospel, we were then in the eye of heaven worthy of liberty and dominion. For who but the hand of that providence which rules in a secret manner all the movements of this world, could carry on together the progress of these three independent works, and guide three distinct chains of events through times so various, and through such hazardous revolutions, in such a manner that they should all at last meet in one point? And now united they form one chain, which by the blessing of heaven seems constructed for a long duration.

Already have our conquests told to all the world that we do not at this time want to be convinced of the value of these blessings; that Britons want no exhortations to stir them up to the defence of a kingdom, a constitution, a religion, like theirs. But yet it must be acknowledged, that in the
be-

beginning of this war something did seem to be wanting to call forth that spirit amongst us which hath since blazed so bright. The period cannot be forgot when our fortune on a sudden was changed. It cannot be forgot that our courage seemed to revive, and our success commenced, at that æra when the system of venality, corruption, and party-administration, which had so long been our disgrace, was publicly disclaimed: when the abettors of that shameful system, struck dumb at the greatness of the attempt, saw in silent astonishment the machine of government put in motion without that false bias of corruption which they had said must of necessity be hung upon it; and moving forward to heights of glory unknown to former times: when faction, awed by superiour virtue, lost for a while all power of opposition, and gave an opportunity of proving to the world what great things might be done on principles of disinterested virtue, and true public spirit: and when the power of these noble principles united for a while all parties, and every thing was forgot but the common good. At that æra of union and public spirit it

was

was that a series of victories commenced which have astonished all Europe. And therefore our success must seem the blessing of heaven on public virtue *.

But, in the second place ; Britain is not characterised by the rougher and warlike endowments alone ; she is no less adorned by the softer and more amiable accomplishments of peace. She has trophies still more glorious than those which have been won in the field of battle. Her triumphs in the cause of truth are not less numerous than in the cause of liberty. And whilst we of this place cannot be thought to be unconcerned in the former part of this exhortation, since the principles of true honour and virtue which are here taught, are the only foundation of true courage, yet are we more immediately interested in the cultivation,

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tion,

* Amongst those national virtues which may have contributed to draw down the blessing of heaven on our public measures, we must not forget that charity, the favourite virtue of heaven, for which this nation hath long been distinguished, and which in the course of this war hath been freely extended even to our enemies in distress.

tion, and in the support of this part of our national character. Our immediate province it is to contribute as far as we are able to the encouragement and improvement of all useful science, and to lay ourselves out in defending and enlarging those acquisitions which our country hath made in knowledge. But chiefly we must remember, that it is not the interests of learning alone which are intrusted in our hands. Learning hath in all times maintained a close alliance with virtue and religion. When after a long exile it again returned to the western world, it returned but to assist in the revival of true religion: and ever since that time have they been making their progress over Europe together. With what zeal then must it inspire us in our studies, to hope, that under providence they may be subservient to the sacred interests of religion! And if even pagan learning was rendered serviceable to christianity at its first introduction into the world, how great would be our reproach if christian learning should not!

This

This leads me to consider a third part of our national character, and which alone can stamp a true value on those which have been already mentioned, a zeal for true religion. Religion hath found an asylum in England when driven from every other part of the world. When ignorance, superstition, and ecclesiastical tyranny have elsewhere usurped her place, England hath stood firm in her cause; hath reasoned, hath acted, hath suffered in her defence; hath maintained her in all her rights, and planted her in her native purity in foreign lands. To the service of religion should all our successes, all the triumphs whether of our valour or our learning be devoted. And oh, may we not here indulge the pleasing hope, that some circumstances in the present situation of the world seem to open out to that glorious time, when christianity shall be universally established! Why else, and to what other end hath it been ordained, that the christian powers are almost the only commercial powers, and that all the great discoveries in the new western world have been made by them? And still more parti-

cularly, why hath it been ordained that we, the most considerable amongst the professors of the truly reformed christianity, have of all others the most extensive commerce, and seem likely to possess the most extensive dominions in this new world? We can hardly suppose these striking circumstances to be the effect of chance, or to be permitted only for mere temporal advantages. Christianity can never act under more favourable circumstances. Paganism and Mahometanism lie still: whilst christianity, with all the means of conversion in her hands, carries on a constant intercourse with the remotest corners of the world. The period seems to be hastening on, when the discovery of the whole globe shall be compleated, and when by means of commerce every part of the world shall be known to each other. Do not all these things seem clearly to be a prelude to that glorious time (for the time will come) when
 “ the earth shall be filled with the know-
 “ ledge of the glory of the Lord, as the
 “ waters cover the sea: when God will
 “ turn to the people a pure language, that
 “ they may all call upon the name of the
 “ Lord,

“ Lord, to serve him with one consent :
 “ and when the Lord shall be king over
 “ all the earth ? ” *

Such is the dignity of that national character which we are called upon to support. Whilst therefore we reflect with veneration on those great names with which the records of our country abound ; those worthies who have gained or established our rights ; those exalted geniuses who have employed their talents in the discoveries and improvements of useful arts for the benefit of mankind ; those awful men who have defended the truth with all the powers of reasoning and learning, who have bled, who have fallen for their religion—the great examples should fire us, should animate us to the defence of our civil and religious liberties, and inspirit us with a noble emulation to act the part of good citizens and good christians, to practice virtue and charity, and by all the means that heaven hath put in our power, to promote the public good.

We

* HAB. ii. 14. ZEPH. iii. 9. ZECH. xiv. 9.

We should remember what their examples have taught us, that to be a BRITON, is not merely to be born in a certain climate, to be a native of a flourishing and beautiful island, blessed with a temperate air and a fruitful soil, where art and nature pour forth all their riches : it is to be more, a patron of liberty, learning, and religion.

It is with a peculiar pleasure that we can survey our national character at this time, when the day naturally mingles with every amiable part of it the idea of the best of sovereigns.

That the liberties of his people are dear to him we had an early proof. It was almost the first act of his reign to put forth his hand to strengthen a weak part of our constitution ; and that not some disputed point of the royal prerogative, but a part in which the rights and liberties of the subject were deeply concerned, and where they lay most exposed to the attacks of some future tyrant. This he did by placing the Guardians

dians of the laws as much as possible above the reach even of royal influence. An act which shewed at once that he understood, and loved, the constitution of his country. And consistently with this beginning, we see him steadily carrying on the operations of government on the same free and generous principles, which shed so bright a lustre round the setting sun of his royal ancestor : no longer ruling by a party, no longer supporting his administration by the force of corruption, but contented to recommend his measures to his subjects by their uprightness and integrity alone.

His love of learning cannot be called in question, since he himself is known to have a taste for letters, and to have made a considerable progress in them. Nor can we of this place forget, as one proof of his benevolence to learning sufficiently flattering to ourselves, with how open and pleasing an aspect we have been more than once received to his royal presence. To this we may add, that his care for the advancement of learning hath been lately extended to
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some infant colonies of learning in a far distant part of his dominions *.

Of his regard for virtue and religion his whole life is one proof. Far from yielding to those uncommon temptations with which a monarch, a youthful monarch, is always surrounded ; far from thinking that his elevated station can give a sanction to liberties which would be condemned in an inferiour station, we see him ambitious only of leading the way in duty, and treading in the path of virtue with all the severity of the hoary sage. Already hath he, by the force of his example, checked that unbounded levity, that universal dissipation and attachment to pleasure, to which all ranks seemed to be devoted. Already hath he severely discountenanced that criminal love of play, which hath involved so many fortunes and so many characters in ruin ; and which was come to that daring height of impiety as to have

* Alluding to the royal bounty which accompanied the Letters Patent, authorising a public collection for the benefit of the colleges of NEW YORK and PHILADELPHIA.

have thrown off all sense of decency, all awe of religion; so as to be restrained by no force of laws, no regard to seasons set apart for the most sacred purposes. Already hath he nobly attempted at least to bring religion again into credit amongst the great and fashionable part of the nation, by his own constant attendance on the public worship of God, and his exemplary behaviour there; by the influence of religion shining through every relation of life; by manifesting a constant sense of his dependance on the King of kings, and thus shewing that he hath made a just estimate of all human greatness. May the work of reformation prosper in his hands; and may virtue descending from the throne spread itself amongst every rank of the people!

These colours are not spread by the pencil of adulation: far be base born flattery from every free British heart; far hence, from this land of liberty, let it fly, to some less happy region, where a people of slaves tremble at the nod of a tyrant. Or should there be found even Britons so degenerate as to stoop to the mean art of slaves; at

least let nothing servile or ignoble ever enter within the precincts of these venerable seats, where nothing but liberal and manly sentiments should be nourished; where the principles of true liberty should be early infused into the tender minds of those who come under our care, and their souls filled with every great and noble purpose.—But it is our duty to enforce and recommend loyalty both by precept and example; and loyalty can never be so effectually recommended, as where it can be planted in the heart and the affections. It is our duty by every motive to recommend piety and a regard for religion. And whilst bad examples are every where spreading their fatal contagion, it would be sacrificing too much to delicacy, to suffer so fair an occasion, as this solemnity gives us, of applying a great example to the interests of virtue, to be lost.

But to conclude. Whilst we glory in the title of Englishmen and Britons, let us not forget that we are to support the still higher titles of Men and of Christians. Let us
re-

remember, that however reasonable and praise-worthy it may be at present to cultivate the more private affections, the love of a family, a particular society, a country; yet the time will come, when all these partial affections, these narrow attachments shall be obliterated; when the godlike plan of christianity shall have its full effect, when our hearts shall be enlarged, and every bosom filled with universal benevolence. The time will come when all distinctions shall be forgotten, but those eternal distinctions of the virtuous and the wicked; and when the worthy and the good of all nations shall be united together in eternal bonds of love. Looking forward therefore to that time, and with all the affection that becomes us for our own country, joining all the benevolence that is due to others, let us with the good patriarch confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; and whilst we enjoy and are thankful for our present happiness, let us like him wait for those better promises of which we have a prospect far off: and being with him persuaded of them, and embracing them in our minds,

minds, let us direct our desires towards that better, that common, that heavenly country, where we trust that the good selected from all mankind shall meet in endless bliss.

/ F I N I S.



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